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There Was a Tree From Eden Sprung

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There Was a Tree From Eden Sprung

There was a tree from Eden sprung
(As such the legend goes),
And from its branches born the fruits
Containing what each knows.

And I, a branch, upon that tree,
Most barren and confused,
Sat quiet with the multitudes
Until aloud I mused:

“O what know I of poetry?”
“But naught,” was my reply,
And turning, there saw Emerson
With his transparent eye.¹

The wind blew coarsely, and its breeze
Passed through a branch of Birch,
The deathly, darkling peals of Poe
Whirled lashing from that perch.²

It winded through the Willow leaves,
Such dolor—cause to cry—
For there I swear was Dickinson
With Heaven’s Hurt to sigh.³

But from an Oak then came a toll
Which, fiercely in my ear,
Rang out immortal melodies
Of William Shakespeare.⁴

Come sky above, well up your tears,
And shower where I fell,
To wash away my ignorance
That I might grow as well.
For all the poets of the world
Combined, a luscious noise,

But given unto me no words,
No signs, no silver voice.

“O what know I of science then?”
“But naught,” came the retort,
And there sat Newton, grave as stone,
With Calculus cohort.⁵

Beside them, Mendel patiently,
His Palms lift to the air,
Did watch to see the flowers bloom
Recording which he paired.⁶

Though silent, Einstein stormed away,
Conceiving time and space.
The light which bent along his bough
Was relatively placed.

And Darwin rested naturally
Upon his Elder post,
Explaining how such varied limbs
Could stem from single host.

Come sky above, well up your tears,
And shower where *I* fell,
To wash away my ignorance
That I might grow as well.
To all these Noble scientists
Who cultivate and yield,
There's nothing I could offer them
From my respective field.

O what know I of anything?”
“But naught,” said Socrates,
While on his limb, dilemma's fruit
Was straining there with ease.⁷

Beside him grew a slender stem,
One petal to its name,
When Epicurus watched it wilt
He carried on the same.⁸

And there under the dappled light
Lay rational Descartes,
Who knew not if the tree remained
With his world torn apart.⁹

Between them all, a broken branch
Held tenuously on,
But snapped, and when it fell from sight,
Once Berkeley, now is gone.¹⁰

Come sky above, well up your tears,
And shower where *I* fell,
To wash away my ignorance
That I might grow as well.
For all these great philosophers
Would question their own name,
But I am full of foolishness
And see all things as plain.

¹ Emerson is noted as saying that the greatest poet would be a “transparent eye.” The poet to manifest this ideal was Walt Whitman.

² Birch branches were typically the favored choice for beatings.

³ In one of Dickinson’s poems, she describes depression and emotional pain as “Heavenly Hurt.”

⁴ Oak is typically considered as the greatest tree, and the favorite of the most powerful gods (e.g., Zeus, Thor).

⁵ The word “grave” is also defined as heavy, punning Newton’s discovery of the laws of gravity; “Calculus cohort” refers to Gottfried Leibniz, who co incidentally invented Calculus (which mean stone in Latin) simultaneous with Newton.

⁶ Mendel is cited as the ‘Father of Genetics;’ “Palms” refers not only to the type of plant, but also to Mendel’s occupation as a friar.

⁷ Socrates, the mentor of Plato, is possibly best known for his Euthyphro dilemma.

⁸ “Death is nothing to us. For while we are, death has not come. And when death has come, we are not.” -Epicurus

⁹ Rene Descartes is perhaps most famous for his “Cogito ergo sum” argument, in which he calls into doubt everything that exists except his ability to think.

¹⁰ George Berkeley is the most famous proponent for idealism, which states that existence is based solely on things being perceived, and not their objective reality.